



## Preface: Hydrology of Large River Basins in Africa

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FRIEND-Water is a flagship program of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Program. Since it started in 1985 the International Association of Hydrological Sciences (IAHS) gave its scientific support to the every 4 years global FRIEND conferences and some other occasional issues, which resulted in the publication of previously called “redbooks” (available online at <https://iahs.info>, last access: 18 October 2021), and now *Proceedings of IAHS (PIAHS)*. This collaboration between FRIEND-Water and IAHS is very important to keep developing the visibility and attractiveness of hydrological and related sciences in all countries of the World, particularly in developing countries. This *PIAHS* issue publishes articles presented at the 4th International Conference on the Hydrology of Large Rivers Basins of Africa, organized by hydrologists of Benin. The co-editors of this issue come from Benin, Senegal, Tunisia, Germany and France, which shows the strong South-North relationships between institutions and colleagues. From more than 230 abstracts, 132 papers were submitted to the *PIAHS* issue, and 56 were eventually accepted after a double peer-reviewing process involving 122 reviewers from 21 countries, listed below.

This conference is the fourth of a series started in 2015 in Tunisia, followed by a second edition in Senegal in 2016, and a third one in Algeria in 2018. Scheduled in 2020 according to the 2-years pace, it has been delayed due to the covid crisis, but is organized mainly with physical presence in November 2021 in Cotonou, Benin. As usual this conference is the occasion to organize training courses, side-event workshops, and for the first time a *PIAHS* volume. This cycle of conferences also refers to the World Large Rivers Initiative launched by UNESCO in 2014 to which it contributes for the continent. The scientific coverage is comprehensive across the global theme of large rivers; ranging from observation, characterisation and modelling of various processes and settings, to the analysis of regimes, changes and security issues. Articles published in that issue, are hence much related to most of the 10 International Commissions of IAHS, and to cross-cutting and agenda-setting initiatives: innovation and assimilation in hydrometry and the data-service value chain (Tauro et al., 2018; Cudennec et al., 2020; in consistence with Pecora and Lins, 2020 and Dixon et al., 2021), Prediction in Ungauged Basins – PUB (Hrachowitz et al., 2013), Hydrological change – Panta Rhei (Montanari et al., 2013;

McMillan et al., 2016) and related Water security (Young et al., 2015; Ceola et al., 2016) and nexus approach (Liu et al., 2017; Connor et al., 2020; Heal et al., 2021), and socio-hydrology and citizen engagement (Di Baldassarre et al., 2019; Nardi et al., 2021). The clustering of the articles in three sections captures that alignment through a progression from hydrological dynamics, to regimes and changes, and to security. The range of African Large Rivers addressed across these articles is a richness as such, with an ultimate value for comparative hydrology; whereas some local studies are also included, which are valuable for documenting knowledge and models.

This open access (as all *PIAHS* volumes) bilingual issue is of particular interest and value for a large community of authors and readers in Africa, in terms of knowledge capitalization and sharing, both at the regional and international levels, within academia and in the science-policy bridging – as advocated by learned societies and UNESCO in terms of Open Science and public good (Cudennec and Hubert, 2008; Hughes et al., 2014; Quinn et al., 2018; Boulton et al., 2021; UNESCO, 2021). Leading authors come from 15 African countries, Canada, France and UK. Beyond these figures, this issue shows the great expectation of African researchers to integrate international institutional activities and share common scientific reflections. This *PIAHS* volume, as a contribution to the FRIEND-Water program, shortly follows the one published in 2020 out of the Beijing Global FRIEND-Water conference in 2018 (Yu et al., 2020). The next Global FRIEND-Water conference is scheduled to be held in Dakar, Senegal in March 2023. The contribution of the African scientific community to IAHS activities is strongly increasing (Hughes et al., 2015; Croke and Jewitt, 2018; Makurira et al., 2018), which is also visible by the very large registration of African colleagues to the ongoing 23 UPHs in Africa initiative (Blöschl et al., 2019), whose results should be integrated to the global 23 UPHs discussions scheduled in Montpellier IAHS XIth scientific assembly in May–June 2022.

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